

## ARTSPEAK

# Writer's Block is an 'evil little monster', says columnist

What do you do when you don't know what to write about? Usually I just sit at the computer, stare off into space, get up, walk around, sit

back down, spin in my chair, et cetera, et cetera.

Writer's Block is an evil little monster that

keeps me from getting a good column written. It's like this little goblin or garden gnome

that sits on my shoulder and spouts off mental white noise so I can't come up with a good topic. I go and check my usual resources to try and get even the tiniest spark of an idea, but nothing. You know,

writing was so much easier back in, say, high school; topics were handed out like candy, and had no where near as much research as university. And they only had to be, what, five pages? Although I must admit as I got older it got harder and harder to only write three to five pages on a subject; I'd take a 10-15 page paper over that any day.

Where was I? Oh yes, the joys of not knowing what to write about. Here's where I heave a big sigh and continue to bemoan my lack of inspiration. It doesn't help that it's such a nice day outside and taking a stroll would be ideal right about now...but no! I shall instead sit and



By Aleisha Hendry

do my duty to deliver a column for you to enjoy! Because that is what I do, even though there are all sorts of things on my desk to distract me from the task. Art history books are interesting to peruse, but I fear that I'll start reading one and before I know it, my deadline will have long since passed. I can't have that now, can I? I can't even fiddle with my ipod because the battery is nearly dead, and if it dies

completely I won't have any music to walk home to. Oh, will these tribulations never end?

I love random tangents, don't you?

In case you were wondering, I'm writing about how I have nothing to write about, which is a contradiction in and of itself; clearly I'm writing about something, so I must have something to write about. It's like some great big paradox, isn't it? This would fit nicely in logical philosophy. A plus B equals C and what have you. But I digress; which is something I do quite a lot. But that's okay, because then this is like a real conversation, isn't it? Not just me typing to myself, about how I have nothing in my head to type about...

This small bout of randomness has been brought to you by Writer's Block, the bane of writers everywhere!

## ARTSPEAK

# Art can help us learn to love who we are

A couple of weeks ago I went and saw a lovely film called 'Hairspray'.

Set in 1960's Baltimore, it follows Tracy Turnblad along her path of achieving her one dream in life; to be a dancer on an American Bandstand type program, The Corny Collins Show.

The only problem, one that Tracy doesn't see as a problem, but many others do, is that Tracy is a big girl. She's not tall and skinny like the other girls on the show, and in their minds won't ever fit in.

Never mind that she's got all the right moves and is absolutely adorable with a heart as big as her hair, her plus size figure makes her an outsider.

It's a sad moment when Tracy is told (through song of all things) that she's too fat (and too pro-integration, but that's a whole other story) to be on the

show.

It is very heartwarming though; to see that she's not going to let anyone, including some has-been beauty queen, tell her that she's not good enough. It's that attitude that really makes the film a true gem.

And it's also that attitude that young girls really need to adopt in today's society.

Some of the greatest artistic masterpieces ever created feature curvy, voluptuous women since way back in the day it was a sign of good health; obviously you weren't starving to death or stricken by disease.

Paintings like Renoir's *Bathers* (1887), which depict three curvaceous women (one even has a few, dare I say, tummy rolls! Gasp!), is truly a gorgeous piece. Another is Manet's famous *Le Déjeuner sur L'Herbe* (1863); the lady in that particular painting would never be accused

of skipping a meal.

These are both highly renowned pieces of art, and I truly don't think anyone would say that they didn't like the painting because the women were "too fat". That would be highly insulting, not to mention narrow minded.

If you wanted to look even farther back, say to 24,000 B.C.E., one of the oldest artistic artifacts ever found was a small figurine of a female which has ironically been called the Venus of Willendorf.

With her large, bulbous stomach, breasts and thighs, experts believe that she was a symbol of beauty, fertility, and was a being to be revered.

Thousands of years later, we've done a complete reversal of that idea by deciding that the ideal woman be an airbrushed, stitched together amalgam of



By Aleisha Hendry

the features society finds the most attractive.

While we no longer carve our idols out of stone, we still hold them in our hands every time we pick up a fashion magazine.

Though it has been long in coming, and we

still have a long way to go, society is slowly beginning to realize that having an unattainable standard of beauty is not healthy for anyone.

Dove began its Campaign for Real Beauty in 2005 after commissioning a study called "The Real Truth about Beauty".

The report interviewed women from around the world to find out their views about beauty in society, how they viewed themselves and how they felt the world viewed them. The results were rather scary; only two per cent of women would actually use the

adjective "beautiful" to describe themselves, 47 per cent rated their body weight as "too high", and that beauty and physical attractiveness have become synonymous.

But at the same time, 68 per cent of women are aware that the standard of beauty that has been set by the media and advertising is unrealistic and most women will never achieve it.

That's a bonus, at least. Although it does show that most women don't believe the ads, it still doesn't stop them from not feeling good about themselves.

Maybe we could all learn a thing or two from Miss Tracy Turnblad. Even though she's a fictional character, she has a very positive message to spread.

People, all people, need to learn to love who they are, because quite frankly, you're stuck with yourself and life will be a whole lot more pleasant if you do.

*Aleisha Hendry is the executive assistant of the Fort St. John Arts Council.*



## ARTSPEAK

# Refrigerator art grows up?

I was asked a question last weekend that really got me thinking. A lady wanted to know how one goes about judging a piece of abstract art.

I think the real question here is how you can narrow this concept down to a small set of guidelines. Abstract art is not

like representational/realistic art, which embodies the idea of taking subjects and trying to copy them as closely as possible on a canvas.

Abstract art tries to capture the essence of the subject in as an aesthetically pleasing manner as possible by using more stylized techniques to show natural figures and subjects.

Now, it would seem that anyone could be an abstract artist; that by slapping some paint on a canvas you can hang the piece up and sell it for thousands of dollars.

Such is not the case, I'm sorry to say, as nice as that would be. There does have to be some thought put into what you're doing, just throwing paint around willy-nilly isn't going to gain you any credibility as an abstract artist.

Although, like I've heard some people say, some of these modern abstract artists have work that looks like it belongs on a refrigerator.

Mark Rothko, a Latvian born American artist, began writing a book in 1936 (that was never published) about the parallels of children's art and modern abstract painters.

Children are the original abstract artists; their work tends to be more about what they are feeling and what colour is pleasing to them rather than trying to make

the picture/painting look hyper-realistic.

The same goes for modern abstract painters; the work is more about the emotional essence and getting down to the baseline primitive nature of their subject as opposed to creating a perfect rendering of it.

His idea is that abstract art is done without real intellectual interference; that it is a purely emotional and spiritual experience.

Everyone has their own ideas regarding abstract art.

Some people think it is a perfectly valid and beautiful genre, while others mock it and feel that anyone and their dog could do an equal to better job.

Maybe they're right, maybe they're wrong. That's

the beauty about this world we live in; we're allowed to have a difference of opinion in such matters.

You may love the emotional quality of abstract art, or you may look at it and think "what was the point of this?". But that's good, because then we are able to have a nice thorough discussion about it! And that's one of the best things about art.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Aleisha Hendry is the executive assistant of the Fort St. John Arts Council*



**By Aleisha Hendry**

## ARTSPEAK

# It's possible to come together for a

You know what's awesome? Well, let me tell you: getting a tip-off about a small venue concert that you love so much that you actually buy the CD and it's the first one you've purchased in five years.

Now that's awesome!

Recently my arts council cohorts and I were in Nelson for the Assembly of BC Arts Council's annual conference. Between all the work-shopping and the seemingly never ending meals, there was minimal time to do any exploring of the funky stores that line Baker Street.

We did manage to sneak in to one for

a few minutes, and I must say, the lady who runs that little shop was most helpful. She told us that if we wanted a "real Nelson experience", we should go to this concert that was happening the following night.

She even called ahead and made sure there were still tickets available! How nice is that?

To make a long story short, we were treated to some amazing jazz-funk-psychedellic trance-fusion type music by Adham Shaikh; a Canadian musician that has played on the international stage for over fifteen years, and brings inspira-

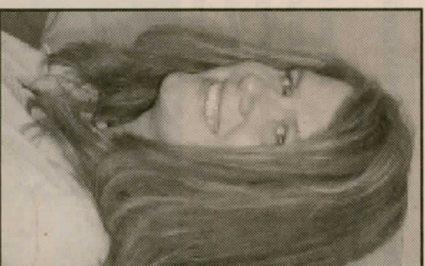
tions from India, Bali, Australia, Africa, Jamaica, The Middle East and North America to create his auditory masterpiece.

And the people who attended! Holy cow, I've never seen such an eclectic mix of people! Hippie kids, middle age couples, the obligatory 'bar stars' and countless others were all able to come together, have a good time and

enjoy a great

evening of music. This was interesting, since the reason we were all in Nelson to begin with was for that conference, which had the theme of 'Coming Together'. Funny how that works out, isn't it?

When I say 'Coming Together', the idea was to think about bringing together those that may not necessarily know how to get involved in



By Aleisha Hendrick

informalized, a great but to If y age ca ways t ture it 2781, We on bov more



## ARTSPEAK

# It's possible to come together for art's sake

You know what's awesome? Well, let me tell you: getting a tip-off about a small venue concert that you love so much that you actually buy the CD and it's the first one you've purchased in five years.

Now that's awesome!

Recently my arts council cohorts and I were in Nelson for the Assembly of BC Arts Council's annual conference. Between all the work-shopping and the seemingly never ending meals, there was minimal time to do any exploring of the funky stores that line Baker Street.

We did manage to sneak in to one for

a few minutes, and I must say, the lady who runs that little shop was most helpful. She told us that if we wanted a "real Nelson experience", we should go to this concert that was happening the following night.

She even called ahead and made sure there were still tickets available! How nice is that?

To make a long story shot, we were treated to some amazing jazz-funk-psychedellic trance-fusion type music by Adham Shaikh; a Canadian musician that has played on the international stage for over fifteen years, and brings inspira-

tions from India, Bali, Australia, Africa, Jamaica, The Middle East and North America to create his auditory masterpieces.

And the people who attended! Holy cow, I've never seen such an eclectic mix of people! Hippie kids, middle age couples, the obligatory 'bar stars' and countless others were all able to come together, have a good time and enjoy a great

evening of music. This was interesting, since the reason we were all in Nelson to begin with was for that conference, which had the theme of 'Coming Together'. Funny how that works out, isn't it?

When I say 'Coming Together', the idea was to think about bringing together those that may not necessarily know how to get involved in arts and culture in their community, a main group being the



By Aleisha Hendry

youth.

And by youth, I don't mean young children, I mean anywhere from mid-teens to early thirties. Youth are a viable resource for any community, and they should be considered as such. If we can get more young people involved with the goings on around here, the community will thrive.

This age group has a plethora of ideas and information that really should be utilized, and the fresh perspective would be a great asset not just to arts and culture, but to the general quality of life.

If you fall into the aforementioned age category, and would like to learn of ways to get involved with arts and culture in Fort St. John, you can call 787-2781, or email at fsjarts@telus.net.

We would love your input and ideas on how we can make the arts and culture more youth friendly here in town.

*Aleisha Hendry is the executive assistant for the Fort St. John Arts Council.*

**ARTSPEAK****Surrealism: Art reflecting minds in overdrive**

Have you ever had a really random and bizarre dream that made total sense while you were having it, but when you went and tried to explain it to someone it didn't make a lick of sense?

Like someone was doing something, and you knew them but it wasn't anyone you knew in real life and no matter how hard you tried you just couldn't figure out why you and this person were doing whatever it was that you were doing?

Yeah, those dreams.

The dream state of sleep occurs during the REM cycle, which stands for Rapid Eye Movement, and it is here that our mind goes into overdrive during the night and we get all those weird images passing through the minds eye.

Most of the time, the dreams

we have are forgotten shortly after waking up, but some are so vivid and realistic that they stay with us for years.

There are those that have trouble expressing and explaining their dreams, but in Paris during the 1920s, a group of people that were

able to do this got together and created a movement that would inspire generations to come.

These men called themselves the Surrealists, and Surrealism, like most artistic movements, had several manifestos.

The one I think describes surrealism the best was made by



**By Aleisha Hendry**

dictions".

Breton believed that the surreal condition was a moment of revelation where the contradictions and oppositions between dreams and reality were resolved and brought together.

It became the duty of those involved in the sur-

Andre Breton, who said: "There is a certain point for the mind from which life and death, the real and imaginary, the past and the future, the communicable and incommunicable, the high and the low cease being perceived as contra-

realist movement to put these ideas to canvas.

The artists who really accomplished these ideals were Rene Magritte and Salvador Dali. These men present, in amazing detail, scenes and objects that are taken out of their natural context and are distorted and combined in unreal and bizarre ways; as they might be in dreams.

Dali himself referred to his paintings as "hand-drawn dream photographs", which is apparent in his widely known painting, *The Persistence of Memory*; which looks as though it could be just a vast barren landscape, if it wasn't for the melting clocks and half a face in the foreground.

Magritte, on the other hand, preferred to mess with a person's

perceptions but created landscapes that would continue on into solid objects or, like with his piece *The Treachery of Images*, paint an object and then include a caption saying that the object is in fact not the object depicted.

This act of thinking outside the box is what led these masterpieces and many others to be created and inspire us even now.

So maybe next time you have a really weird and/or bizarre dream, try and write down as much as you can when you first wake up. Then you can take those notes and put them to paper.

Who knows what kind of surreal piece you'll come up with?

*Aleisha Hendry is the executive assistant of the Fort St. John Arts Council.*



## ARTSPACE

# Art from India is fascinating

## Part 2 of 2

Continuing on with our discussion of Indian art, we can now move from the Buddhist aspect and see what else India has for us!

Like a lot of old European art, we've seen that a country's religion can be a large factor in the art that is discovered there.

So now that we've looked at one of India's religions, we can now take a look at and have a small taste of another; Hinduism.

Hinduism is a vastly complex faith that would require a mastery of ancient texts and languages to fully understand. Thankfully, the art can be understood without being a scholar of ancient Indian iconography.

The important thing to know is that the images of the various gods were not worshiped in and of themselves. Rather, they were used as a way for the mortal human being to identify with the deities.

The representations described the deity and their powers as accurately as possible, so if that means adding more heads and several arms in order to properly portray the symbols and attributes of the deity, then so be it.

A common portrayal is that of the three great gods of Hinduism; Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva.

Brahma is the creator, and he is often shown with four heads facing the four directions to show that he is all-seeing.

Although being The Creator is important, his image is not as artistically important as his counterparts.

Vishnu is the preserver, and is seen in many forms including a lion, a fish, and a boar; whatever form is necessary for him to save the world and maintain the balance of the universe. The last figure in this triad would be Shiva, the destroyer. Shiva is the one that brings about the end of the universe so that Brahma may recreate it.

Most often, Shiva is depicted as dancing away the universe, which earned him the moniker of 'Lord of the Dance'.

And in some cases, one of these gods will take on all three roles; it all depended on what the sculptor believed was the proper depiction, as well as where the image was being shown and who would see it.

Most of these images were seen in shrines and temples that were covered in ornate sculptures, friezes



**By Aleisha Hendry**

and pillars that made the buildings a work of art in and of themselves.

There is a lot of art from India out there; everything from B.C.E. to medieval times, to modern day.

Bollywood films are becoming quite popular in the Western world, and India is among many

people's top 10 places to visit someday.

In fact, if you were to pop in to Peace Gallery North right now, you'd see some amazing photographs of life in India, as seen through the eyes of Fort St. John resident and photo buff Barb Daley.

Her experience was a poignant one, and it shows in the shots she took. From buildings, to people, to a little beetle scurrying across the sand, this exhibit has a great range of images that everyone will find beauty in.

'Eyes on India: A Photographic Journey' runs until March 3, so go have a look while you still can!

*Aleisha Hendry is the executive assistant of the Fort St. John Arts Council.*



**ARTSPEAK**

# The world's art history is worth examining

I've studied a lot of art history over the years, and there was something about the classes I took that always bothered me just a bit.

We had to go out and buy these monster textbooks, and we really only wound up studying about half of them. The half we did look at was all the European and North American art, which is wonderful, don't get me wrong. But we were skipping over some amazing stuff because of it. And just this past year, a professor got it in their head that there was a select group of us that really wanted to learn more about those chapters we had been told to ignore.

And so, Aspects of Asian Art History 368-369 was born. It was about time, too!

The art of India dates back to the dawn of civilization, beginning in the Indus Valley at the city of Mohenjo-daro; a huge excavation that took place in the 1930s when digging up ancient civilizations was all the rage.

Upon discovering this remarkably advanced civilization, and all the treasures it had, people were more curious than ever to learn about this brilliant culture. Ornate sculptures in limestone and copper were found depicting religious icons and daily life. Intricately decorated pottery and amazingly detailed stone stamps were just a few things found in this land that time had buried.

From there other sites and artifacts have been discovered. Earlier finds showed a heavy Buddhist influence on the art of the time. Although, back then, Buddha was almost never depicted in any of the work found.

This is referred to as aniconism, in that the figurehead of the faith is not actually



**By Aleisha Hendry**

shown, but signs that he was there are, as well as symbols that represent him. In Buddha's case, he was represented by a wheel (the symbol of Buddha's Law) or by a Bodhi tree (under which he first achieved enlightenment) or by a three part umbrella (symbolic of the three aspects of Buddhism: the Buddha, Buddha's Law and the Monastic Order).

Eventually depictions of Buddha began to appear, and it was easy to discern who Buddha was in these carvings and images. Not only because he was the largest figure, but because he is shown with very few, if any, adornments on his body; a symbol of his letting go of material possessions that is an essential component of Buddhism.

Every detail is related to some aspect of Buddhism, and nothing is there by accident; it all has reasons for being there. The positioning of his hands, called mudr's, had various meanings depending on how the fingers and palms were shown. The most common of these being the Abhaya, or 'no-fear' mudr?, which represents protection, peace, benevolence and the easing of one's fears. It's amazing how the smallest things can change the meaning of an image so much.

This Dharmic religion lasted in ancient India until around the 13th century, where it declined and eventually disappeared in most regions. It did manage to survive in Himalayan areas and over the last century has reemerged as a major faith in India.

Next time we shall look at the art that took over while Buddhism was on a break, as it were.

*Aleisha Hendry is the executive assistant of the Fort St. John Arts Council.*



**ARTSPEAK****Self-portraits: What do you see in the mirror?**

Have you ever taken a good look in the mirror? Just kind of stood there, looking at the image reflected back at you and wondered 'Is that really me'? That the face looking back at you is actually who you are and not just some strange mask that is worn to keep the rest of the world from discovering that you are not what you claim to be?

Or is it just me?

Seriously though, the self-portrait is a piece that everyone who has ever taken an art class has had to do at least once. It's a rather daunting experience, since it forces you to look at any flaws you may feel you have and then decide, 'do I really want to put that in my

drawing/painting/photo/whatever'?

I know I've done a few self-portrait drawings where I may have kinda sorta made my nose a bit smaller...and my eyes a bit bigger...and taken a few other liberties with my appearance (ex. making sure I wore a bandanna to school that day so I wouldn't have to draw my hair). We all have this perception of how we look, and sitting there, looking in a hand mirror and being told to draw what you see can really suck if you don't particularly like what you see.

There are several artists that come to mind when I think of the self-portrait. Cindy Sherman has made a career out of doing self-portraits, but she rarely

goes as 'Cindy Sherman' in her photographs. Extensive make-up and costuming turns her into a completely different person, while still maintaining that it is a self-portrait. It is her in every shot, but you'd never be able to tell just by looking at it.

German artist Katharina Sieverding is another that has built a name for herself as a self-portraitist. Unlike Cindy Sherman, however, Sieverding doesn't try and hide or change her face in any significant way. What you see is what you get, and that's just the way she likes



**By Aleisha Hendry**

it. She has made it her life's work to explore the tenuous relationship between individuals and society.

Chuck Close is another self-portrait artist that has no fear of exposing his image to the world. His work is interesting in that he's been doing it for

decades, so you actually see how he's grown and changed as an individual.

Of course, along with this practice comes the criticism of being or having narcissistic tendencies. People don't like having others thinking that they're vain or egotistical.

Perhaps the perception of the self-portrait needs to be altered then; perhaps these people that use themselves as the subject of their work are not so in love with their own image, but rather should be applauded for their bravery in showing the world a vulnerable side which many of us would rather hide.

As shy as people can be about talking about themselves, it's not a bad thing to be able to explore who you are and what you stand for as a human being.

So I say to you, the next time you look in the mirror, instead of looking for any flaws or imperfections see the wonderfully unique individual that looks back at you.

*Aleisha Hendry is the executive assistant for the Fort St. John Arts Council.*

ARTSPEAK

# The meaning of colour in today's art world

In the years before Technicolour, the world that was shown to us on the TV set was a wash of black, white, and multiple shades of grey.

All forms of media appeared that way, black and white print and black and white images as far as the eye could see.

It's amazing that we haven't become hyper stimulated by all the HD and LCD and Plasma everything out there now.

But since colour is an essential component in a human being's

basic development, perhaps this is not a bad thing.

Colour has a lasting impact on everyone, which is why virtually everyone has a favorite colour. Something we associate with that particular colour triggers pleasant memories and sensations that make us want that color around us.

Different colours have different meanings in different cultures. For example, in China red is associated with luck and prosperity while in North America, red

means stop, warning, or danger.

In our part of the world, we associate black with

death and mourning, while in India, white is the mourning colour, and in Thailand, they use purple.

Back in the middle ages, it wasn't red and black that people associated with evil, but green and yellow, which are traditionally happy colors in this day and age.

Colours also have effects on the body and mind. Studies have shown that people who want to lose weight should have a lot of blue in and around where they eat.

This is said to be because there are no naturally blue fruits, vegetables or meats, and therefore we are put off by the idea of eating something blue for dinner.

On the flip side of that, brown is said to make us hungry, so many restaurants pick more earthy tones on order to get people to buy more food.

The best example of the mental repercussion of colour is that of

Baker-Miller pink, more commonly referred to as 'drunk-tank pink'. This is a shade of pink that is painted in holding cells of jails because it is believed to calm down the prisoners and soothe them into a non-violent state. This bubble-gum

shade of pink is meant to act as a tranquilizer that saps your energy, rendering you incapable of aggression even if you wanted to. Isn't colour psychology fun?

Extreme colour has often been under scrutiny throughout history. The Fauvist movement in Paris during the early 1900s was so named upon seeing the blazingly-coloured canvases in Gallery VII in the Salon d'Automne.

Fauve being French for 'wild beast', it was meant as a derogatory



By Aleisha Hendry

term, but was embraced by those artists that were a part of the movement as a way of showing their critics that they did not care if the colours were too bright or bold.

About a decade later in Germany, a movement that

embraced a bold sense of colour was Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider). Spearheaded by Vasily Kandinsky and Franz Marc, vibrant primary colours and rich secondary colours were invading the art world and blowing people's minds.

So let's whisper a word of thanks to our Technicolour world, and the wonders of the colours that enrich all our lives.

*Aleisha Hendry is with the Fort St. John Arts Council.*



## ARTSPEAK

# Photo art has carved a niche

Old vs. new, traditional vs. modern, Neo-Classicism vs. Art Nouveau. What's new is hot, what's old is not, this is the information age, get with the times or get left behind...and a million other little clichés.

Is there any place for the old ways in this digital age?

As an avid photography fan, of both film and digital, I'd like to think that there is.

The digital versus film debate has been raging for quite some time, and as it stands right now, digital photography is kicking butt. So much in fact that Kodak, probably the most recognized company in the photography business, is now only promoting digital products to its regular consumers.

Film is now under a 'Professional Products' category, which implies that only those individuals that are in the category of 'professional photographer' should be checking out these products.

It's one big massive conspiracy, I tell ya!

Conspiracies aside, it's a really amazing phenomenon, this digital/film debacle. Obtaining a



By Aleisha Hendry

photograph used to be time consuming, and yet so worthwhile an endeavor. Back in the early years of photography, a person would have to be attached to a back brace and try their hardest not to smile, since the exposure time could be 30 minutes or longer, and even the slightest movement

would blur the image.

But many felt that it was worth it to have their distinguished family portrait done in a day instead of hiring a painter to paint the portrait which would take much longer.

Nowadays even waiting an hour for photos to be done is a form of torture for some people. But the satisfaction of having that little packet of photos in your hands, not even being able to wait until you get home to look at them, flipping through them and having a good laugh over those little memories as you wonder 'Oh man, what was I thinking?!' Good times had by all.

But who needs all that when you can buy a digital camera and see your photos half a second after you take it, and then fire them off on your at-home photo printer? Gone is

the anticipation and exhilaration of the film developing process, replaced by the right-here-right-now ideals of the digital age.

Now that photography is accessible to everyone with the money to buy a point-and-shoot-itty-bitty-little digital camera, it's become a hot commodity as opposed to the precious thing it once was.

Film photography will live on though, don't you worry. While digital does have its place in the art world, it is film that is becoming a true art form. If for no other reason than it being something that isn't as widely practiced anymore, the timeless quality of the darkroom process links you more acutely to your photographs than digital ever could.

In darkroom photography, you develop your own negatives, choose your own exposure and contrast, pick the size you want the photo to be, expose the paper and witness the image almost magically appear in the tray of developer chemical. It's such an amazing experience.

So whether your tastes lean towards modern or traditional, darkroom or Photoshop, photographic art has carved itself a nice little niche in the art community and is definitely here to stay.

*Aleisha Hendry is the executive assistant for the Fort St. John Arts Council.*